

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /028 W  
-----230821Z 092476 /12

R 221559Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3775  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 1855

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR LE

SUBJ: WALID JUNBLATT - BIO REPORT

REF: BEIRUT 1657

1. SUMMARY: TWENTY-EIGHT YEAR OLD WALID JUNBLATT SUCCEEDED TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE YAMANI FACTION OF THE DRUZE ON MARCH 17, 1977, THE DAY AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF HIS FATHER, KAMAL. SAID TO BE WELL-DISPOSED TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES, WALID IS A LEADING CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED HIS FATHER AS LEADER OF THE POPULAR SOCIALIST PARTY (PSO). MOST LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE HE IS LESS GIFTED THAN HIS FATHER, BUT WE CANNOT YET JUDGE WALID'S POLITICAL ABILITIES AND VIEWS. END SUMMARY.

2. WALID KAMAL JUNBLATT SUCCEEDED TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE YAMANI FACTION OF THE DRUZES ON MARCH 17, 1977, THE DAY AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF HIS FATHER, KAMAL. WALID  
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WILL THUS PRESIDE OVER TRADITIONAL DRUZE COURT PROCEEDINGS, COMMAND A DRUZE MILITIA, AND ADMINISTER LARGE, INHERITED LANDHOLDINGS. AN ONLY CHILD, BORN ON JULY 9, 1948, IN THE SAME CHOUF TOWN AS HIS FATHER, MUKHATARA, WALID AT 28 IS LARGELY A POLITICAL UNKNOWN. BASED ON COMMENTS OF MISSION SOURCES, HOWEVER, WE HAVE PIECED TOGETHER THE FOLLOWING, ADMITTEDLY TENTATIVE PORTRAIT.

3. ATTITUDES.

A. WALID IS WELL-DISPOSED TOWARDS AMERICANS, BOTH PERSONALLY AND POLITICALLY. HE HAS TOLD FRIENDS THAT HE HAS GREAT RESPECT FOR AMERICAN PRINCIPLES, BUT BELIEVES THE UNITED STATES HAS NEGLECTED LEBANON BY GIVING TOO MUCH SUPPORT TO THE ISRAELIS AND NOT ENOUGH TO THE ARABS.

B. WALID PLACES IMPORTANCE IN RESTORING HARMONY BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCIPAL DRUZE FACTIONS--THE YAMANI LED BY THE JUNBLATT FAMILY AND THE QAYSI LED BY THE ARSLAN FAMILY. IN THIS REGARD, HE IS SAID TO RESEMBLE HIS PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER, NAZIRA JUNBLATT, WHO SOUGHT FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL DRUZE FACTIONS, RATHER THAN HIS MATERNAL GRANDFATHER, SHAKIB ARSLAN, WHO WAS INTERESTED MORE IN PAN-ARABISM THAN CLAN AFFAIRS.

C. AN ADVOCATE OF CHRISTIAN AND DRUZE COEXISTENCE IN THE CHOUF, WALID TOURED VILLAGES IN THE REGION AFTER HIS FATHER'S ASSASSINATION AND PUBLICLY CALLED UPON THE INHABITANTS TO PLACE LOYALTY TO LEBANON BEFORE CONFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS. IN AN INDIRECT BUT CLEAR CONDEMNATION OF DRUZE REPRISALS AGAINST CHRISTIANS, WALID TOLD REPORTERS "MY LOSS IS GREAT BECAUSE OF THE DEATH OF MY FATHER, AND TODAY MY LOSS IS GREATER BECAUSE OF THE REACTIONS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED."

D. WALID IN THE PAST WAS REPORTEDLY ON GOOD TERMS WITH  
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THE CHAMOUNS. ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL PRESS AND OTHER SOURCES, WALID WAS ONCE DETAINED BY PHALANGIST MILITIA AT HAZMIEH, BUT RELEASED AFTER THE PERSONAL INTERVENTION OF DANY CHAMOUN. WALID RECENTLY TOLD AN EMBOFF, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF A DIALOG WITH THE CHAMOUNS AT PRESENT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 1855

4. POLITICAL BEHAVIOR.

A. ON MARCH 23, 1977, THE PSP MADE WALID A "GUIDING MEMBER," AND MOST PSP MEMBERS EXPECT HIM TO SUCCEED HIS FATHER AS PARTY LEADER. DESPITE A RESERVED MANNER, WALID HOPES TO BE MORE THAN HIS FATHER'S SON AND TO ESTABLISH A POLITICAL REPUTATION IN HIS OWN RIGHT. ALTHOUGH LESS INTELLIGENT THAN KAMAL, WALID IS CONSIDERABLY MORE PRAGMATIC.

B. WALID WAS NOT AFRAID TO DISAGREE WITH HIS FATHER AND WAS ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE WHO DARED CRITICIZE THE PSP TO HIS FACE. ACCORDING TO MURABITUN MEMBER ZUHAYR JIBAWI, WALID USED TO EXPLAIN: "I AM NOT AMINE GEMAYEL OR DORY CHAMOUN." WALID PLAYED LITTLE ROLE IN THE PSP, HOWEVER, UNTIL THE CLOSING MONTHS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN 1976, WHEN DRUZE CHIEFTAINS WARNED THAT THEY WOULD NOT FOLLOW ABBAS KHALAFF, THE CHRISTIAN VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PSP, IN THE EVENT OF KAMAL'S DEATH.

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5. EDUCATION, MARRIAGE, AND PERSONALITY.

A. WALID'S PARENTS WERE SEPARATED A FEW YEARS AFTER HIS BIRTH AND HE WAS RAISED BY A SWISS GOVERNESS AND HIS FATHER. WALID ATTENDED THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF BEIRUT FROM 1956 TO 1969 AND GRADUATED WITH A FRENCH BACCALAUREATE. HE ATTENDED THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT (AUB) FROM 1969 TO 1971 AND GRADUATED WITH A BA IN POLITICAL SCIENCE. HE PURSUED A MASTER'S PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AT AUB FROM OCTOBER 1972 TO FEBRUARY 1975, BUT STOPPED HIS STUDIES BEFORE TAKING HIS DEGREE BECAUSE OF THE OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR.

B. WALID MARRIED AN IRANIAN WHOM HE MET AT AUB. OLDER THAN WALID, SHE DRANK TOO MUCH, AND THE MARRIAGE CAUSED A SERIOUS FALLING OUT BETWEEN WALID AND HIS FATHER. WALID DIVORCED HIS WIFE ON MARCH 16, 1977, ONLY HOURS BEFORE THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

C. WALID HAS AN EYE FOR PRETTY WOMEN AND A SENSE OF HUMOR, ACCORDING TO FRIENDS. DURING COLLEGE DAYS, HE AFFECTED "HIPPIE-LIKE" BEHAVIOR, DRESSING IN A DISHEVELED MANNER AND ROAMING BEIRUT ON A MOTORCYCLE. CLASSMATES IN COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL FOUND HIM PLEASANT, SOMEWHAT TIMID, AND OF ONLY AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE. ACCORDING TO THE WEEKLY AL JAMHOUR, HE ABHORS SMOKING, BUT LIKES READING, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND CLASSICAL MUSIC.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH MANY LOCAL OBSERVERS CONSIDER WALID LESS GIFTED THAN HIS FATHER, WE BELIEVE IT TOO EARLY TO JUDGE WALID'S POLITICAL ABILITIES. KAMAL, BEFORE HE BECAME HEAD OF THE YAMANI, WAS SUPPOSEDLY SHY, RETIRING, AND UNFIT FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. SIMILARLY, IT IS PREMATURE TO PREDICT WITH ANY CONFIDENCE THE POLITICAL POSITIONS WHICH WALID WILL ESPOUSE (SEE REFTTEL).  
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